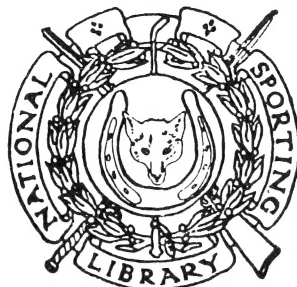


# NEWS



# LETTER

A Research Center for Turf and Field Sports,  
their History and Social Significance

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## A FRENCH ANIMAL PAINTER IN THE UNITED STATES

### HENRI DE LATTRE, c. 1835-1839, 1850-1856

#### His 1850 Portrait of DUTCHMAN Alexander Mackay-Smith

*One of the more important pictures coming to the National Sporting Library from the estate of the late Harry Peters, Jr. is the 1850 colored lithograph published by Nathaniel Currier of New York after Henri De Lattre's 1850 portrait of Dutchman, which is considered in the accompanying article.*

Henri De Lattre (1801-1876) was a French animal painter (animalier) who made two visits to the United States, during both of which he was based in Philadelphia. We know that he was there as early as 1835. On April 16 and 17, 1957 the Parke Bernet Galleries sold at auction the sporting books collected by David Wagstaff. Lot #101 included a De Lattre letter written in 1835, headed "Philadelphia, Nov. 1" and addressed to J. C. McGuire of Washington, written in English, concerning the sale of some of his paintings. A painting of a chestnut horse held by a black groom, signed and dated New York 1836, was sold as part of the Harry T. Peters Jr. Collection (lot #78) by Christies', New York, on June 4, 1982. The last recorded and dated picture of this period is signed "H. De Lattre, Dec. '39".

During his first visit De Lattre's attempts at equine portraiture were given a chilly reception by horsemen. William T. Porter, proprietor and editor of the country's two sporting magazines, the weekly *Spirit of the Times* and the monthly *American Turf Register and Sporting*



*Magazine*, was particularly outspoken in print, while refusing to publish De Lattre's portraits of Wagner and Monarch.

Porter also compared De Lattre most unfavorably with Edward Troye, the country's leading sporting artist from 1832 to 1872. Troye, a member of the de Troy family of artists, prominent in French painting

since the 17th century, after being educated as a sporting painter in England, had come to Philadelphia in the autumn of 1831. Having experienced the problems of launching an artistic career in a strange country, he befriended De Lattre and helped him to secure commissions from

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two of the country's leading horsemen, Col. William Ransom Johnson, "The Napoleon of the Turf", of "Oaklands, Chesterfield County, Virginia and Col. Wade Hampton II of "Millwood", Columbia, South Carolina.

In the spring of 1839 both men were at "Oaklands", De Lattre painting Argyle and Boston, Troye painting Fanny and making a charcoal drawing of Boston which he allowed De Lattre to copy. Although the latter missed a few points of conformation, such as long pasterns, his Boston portrait was a great success, published by Porter in both magazines. The extent of Troye's help is apparent when the portrait of Boston is compared with De Lattre's portrait of Argyle, much inferior, although painted by the same artist at the same time.

The hostility of Porter and of other leading lights in the world of horse racing was obviously discouraging for De Lattre, to such an extent that he went back to France. There are no known canvases of his dated 1840, in fact it is quite possible that he left the country before Porter published the Boston portrait in the March 7, 1840 issue of the Spirit of the Times.

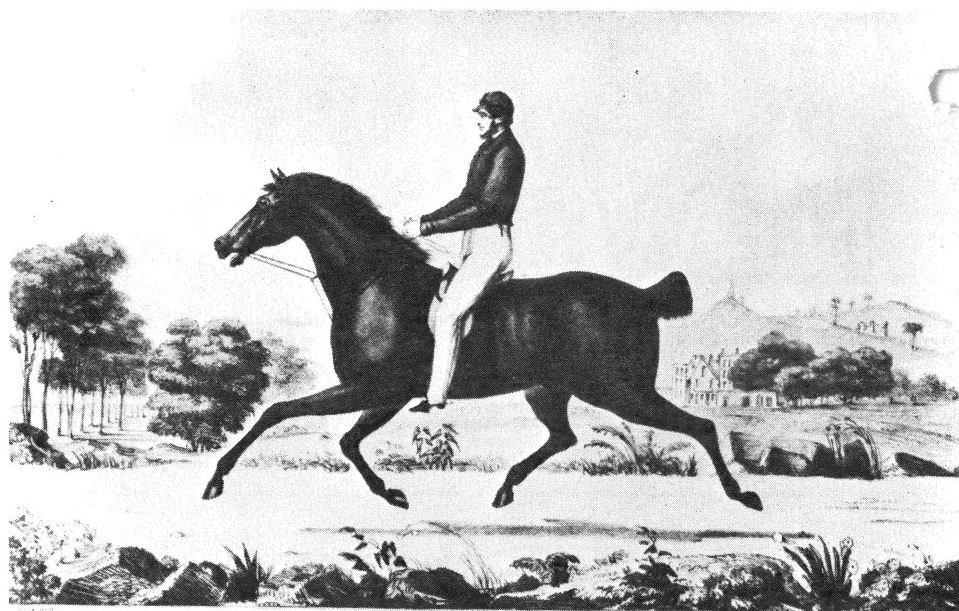
#### 1850-1856

In the autumn of 1849 Edward Troye, who had previously travelled far and wide to horse farms in the eastern states painting horse portraits on commission, accepted a position as Professor of French and Drawing at the Spring Hill Academy, Mobile, Alabama. Since there was then no one else in the country able to paint equine portraits of artistic merit, De Lattre saw a second opportunity - he may well have been encouraged to return to this country by his friend Troye. The Philadelphia directories for 1850-1854 give his address as 69 Locust Street, for 1855 as Locust Street above Eighth.

During the intervening dozen years, perhaps inspired by the work of other French painters such as Vernet, Delacroix and Meissonier, De Lattre had become a much improved artist.

Because of Porter's harsh criticism of a decade earlier, in order to launch a successful career in this country as an animal painter, De Lattre needed more than lack of competition from Troye. Fortunately he surpassed the latter in one respect. Troye's portraits were invariably of horses standing still, very beautiful and accurate, but nonetheless static. De Lattre, on the other hand, now proved successful in portraying horses in motion. It was this ability which particularly recommended the artist to Nathaniel Currier of New York.

In 1850 Nathaniel Currier, senior part-



ner in the later (1857) firm of Currier and Ives, was well on the way to making a fortune by publishing colored lithographs. After a few earlier prints had sold well, he concluded that there was a big demand for pictures of trotting horses racing. In that year he published pictures of Lady Suffolk, Lady Moscow, Jenny Lind, Black Hawk, Grey Eagle, Pelham, James K. Polk, Jack Rossiter and Ripton winning their most famous races.

Dutchman, a bay gelding foaled 1828, by Tipposaub Jr., became a national hero on August 1, 1839, at the Beacon Course, Hoboken, New Jersey, when, ridden by 22 year old Hiram Woodruff, he trotted three miles in seven minutes thirty-two and one-half seconds; this three mile record under saddle remains unbeaten to this day. Furthermore, since the second mile was accomplished in 2:28, Dutchman became the first trotter to beat 2:30 which later (November 19, 1879) became the standard for admission to the Stud Book. This was a match race against time for a purse of \$1,000.00

Currier needed a colored lithograph of Dutchman making his three mile record to add to his gallery of trotters. The horse had died three years previously, but De Lattre had, in fact, painted a previous portrait, signed and dated "H. De Lattre, Dec. '39", not long after the horse made his three mile record, which De Lattre might well have witnessed. The picture was presumably commissioned by the horse's then owner, General George Cadwallader of Philadelphia. Since this first portrait was evidently not available as a model for the lithographer, De Lattre painted a se-

cond portrait, oil on canvas 22" x 27". Having served Mr. Currier's purpose, along with other examples of the artist's work, it was entered, exhibited and catalogued as #123 in the 1850 annual exhibition of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, and offered for sale.

A colored lithograph after the painting, measuring 12.13" by 20.14" was published by Currier the same year (1850). One of the most sought after racing prints of the 19th century, it is illustrated in color (sepia) in Currier and Ives, *Printmakers to the American People* by Harry T. Peters, 1929, Plate 79.

Currier's lithographer followed De Lattre's canvas closely with respect to horse and rider. Dutchman was a hard "puller" (on the bit and reins) which is shown by the horse's open mouth. De Lattre captured, and the print maker copied faithfully, the seat and physique of Hiram Woodruff, a superb athlete with "a most compact and elastic frame, fit for a gladiator". With his saddle that day Woodruff weighed 154 pounds. Whereas the background of the painting is simple (a section of rail fence enclosing the track, on the post of which appears "3 mile, 7:32", the three mile record) the lithographer added a more elaborate scene including trees, hills and a Gothic Revival mansion.

As part of the extensive letter press at the bottom of the print Nathaniel Currier included his own name, but not, as was often the case, the name of the artist. Perhaps the memory of Porter's criticisms, ten years previously, may have had something to do with this omission.

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It was the excellence of this 1850 portrait of Dutchman, the "speaking blemishes" of horse and rider and the presentation of record speed at the trot, which transformed the failure of De Lattre's first trip to the United States into the success which he enjoyed during the years 1850-1856. The publication of the colored lithograph based on the painting was a stroke of good fortune, not only for the artist, but also for the publisher. A year later, Nathaniel Currier published another colored lithograph based on De Lattre's picture of the race under saddle at the Hunting Park Course, Philadelphia, on July 18, 1849, between the trotters Zachary Taylor and Mac, and this time the artist's name was included in the inscription.

De Lattre's 1850 portrait of Dutchman next surfaces in the book on Currier and Ives by that great collector and authority Harry T. Peters, Sr., Volume I, pp. 70-72. It is mentioned in the section devoted to Thomas Worth (1834-1917), famous for his caricatures and portraits of race horses, who submitted his first comic sketch to Nathaniel Currier in 1855 and later became one of the most popular artists whose work was lithographed by his firm. Mr. Peters wrote:

#### THOMAS WORTH

"Much of my knowledge has come through a long and intimate acquaintance with the late Mr. Thomas Worth, long an artist with Currier & Ives, and a delightful gentleman. My first recollection of "Uncle Tommy", as he was known to all his acquaintances and friends, and was at the old Lake House which stood between Islip and East Islip on the Suffolk Road, a rambling old hotel, whose architecture may best be described as Queen Anne before and Mary Ann behind. Its chief feature in the latter years of its life was its barroom with sanded floors, where the sporting fraternity of that section used to gather, much as we do now, to discuss the good old times. Here it was that I first met "Uncle Tommy" Worth. He found I also liked horses, led me out behind the old hotel to show me the stall where "Dexter" (78) used to stand, and regaled me with stories of great men and horses.

The walls of the old hotel were covered with Currier & Ives prints, but there was one picture in particular, hanging over the fireplace in the old office of the hotel, which struck my fancy. This was an oil painting of "Dutchman", the first horse to trot twenty miles within the hour, ridden by Hiram Woodruff. I had a consuming desire to possess that painting and it was until many, many years later, after the hotel was torn down, that I secured it, from Mr. Worth, who had gotten it when the hotel closed. The 1850 small folio "Dut-

chman" was made from this painting. One day I asked him if he remembered where the old picture had hung. He sat down at my desk and drew a sketch, writing on its back the following inscription:

Office of Lake House kept by Amos R. Stellenwerf for over forty years. Some of the most distinguished people in the country put up at the old fashioned house with its crooked hall and quaint passages, old fireplaces and Franklin stoves. Its great attraction was its splendid table, fine old wines and liquors, and its perfect cleanliness. Its proprietor was a man of great intelligence and personal attractiveness. It has also been a great place for shooting and fishing.

I remember asking "Uncle Tommy" what sort of breeches Hiram Woodruff wore in the picture and he gave me a minute description of how Mrs. Woodruff, out of some durable light-colored material, manufactured breeches that were very tight in the leg and that had a strap that passed under the foot and were suitable for both riding and driving. I believe to the firm of Mr. and Mrs. Woodruff proper credit is due for inventing the first pair of American jodhpurs, that very comfortable substitute for breeches and boots, which has migrated from India to England and is now so popular in America with those young people who are too lazy to put on breeches and boots. Examination of this old picture reveals Hiram Woodruff riding in jodhpurs in the late thirties."

Mr. Peters was correct in saying, "The 1850 small folio Dutchman was made from this painting." He was incorrect, however, in attributing the paint to Edward Troye. The latter left the Northeast (Philadelphia) in the autumn of 1835 and did not return to that area (New York) until January, 1857 - he never saw Dutchman,

who died in 1847. Troye never painted a horse in motion. The painting is pure De Lattre, with no Troye characteristics.

Thenceforth De Lattre enjoyed marked success. Whereas among the canvases exhibited at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in 1850, only one belonged to a collector other than the artist, in subsequent years (1851-1855) only one belonged to De Lattre! In 1852 one of his masterpieces, The Stuyvesant Family Stable, was exhibited in New York at the National Academy of Design. He executed a number of commissions for Philadelphia patrons, and a whole series of Thoroughbred portraits for William Hayward Gibbons of Madison, New Jersey, including (1855) the great race mares Bönnetts o' Blue and her even more famous daughter Fashion. In the summer of 1856 at the Charles Lloyd farm, Holmdel, New Jersey, he painted Lexington's great rival, Lecomte, for Richard Ten Broeck just before the horse was shipped to England. The two latter portraits are currently in the collection of the Jockey Club, New York city.

Like his 1839 portrait of Boston, De Lattre's later Thoroughbred portraits were strongly influenced by Troye. The latter in June 1855 had given up his position at Spring Hill Academy in order to accompany Keene Richards of "Blue Grass Park", Georgetown, Kentucky, during the latter's second expedition to Arabia, organized to buy stallions and mares from the Bedouin Sheiks. Troye returned to New York in January 1857. There are apparently no De Lattre pictures painted in this country dated later than 1856 - the artist, perhaps influenced by Troye's return, sailed for his native France where he died in June 1876.

Some notes and observations about the manuscript of A. Henry Higginson's unpublished book: **FOXHOUNDS - THEIR MANAGEMENT AND HUNTING IN AMERICA** - by An American M.F.H., dated March, 1911, a copy of which has recently been presented to the National Sporting Library by Mr. Daniels.

## A. HENRY HIGGINSON'S UNPUBLISHED MANUSCRIPT

John Daniels

In 1958 the manuscript of Higginson's unpublished book was given to me by the granddaughter of Mr. Worrell Clarkson, who founded the Hermstead Hunt in Minnesota in the early 1920's. Higginson and Chamberlain in their 1928 book, **HUNTING IN THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA**, devote several pages to the new Hermstead Hunt being formed in Minnesota by Mr. Clarkson. Based on Mr. Higginson's Preface to the unpublished book, it would seem logical that Higginson gave

or loaned Clarkson the manuscript in order to help him start his new hunt.

The 1911 manuscript was never published. In fact, aside from his Kennel Stud Books for the Masters of Foxhounds Association of America, A. Henry Higginson did not do any writing for publication from 1908 to 1928. One reason why the 1911 manuscript never saw the light of day is that the year after he had written it, Higginson reached a "turning point" in his

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life. He describes this in the Introductory chapter to his book, *FOXHUNTING - THEORY AND PRACTICE* which he published in 1948. In 1912 Higginson received an answer to his letter to the Ninth Duke of Beaufort and subsequently travelled to Badminton and visited the Duke and his kennels. From that time forward Higginson became a confirmed Anglophile.

Higginson moved to England, established his own pack and lived in England for the rest of his life, returning to the United States on only a few occasions. While he lived in England, Higginson wrote and published a number of books about foxhunting. There are many similarities between his unpublished manuscript of 1911 and his 1948 book, *FOXHUNTING - THEORY AND PRACTICE*. On the basis of the chapter headings alone it would seem that Higginson probably used the 1911 MS as an outline for his 1848 book.

Five of the chapter headings (INTRODUCTORY; THE MASTER; THE HUNTSMAN; THE FIELD; and THE FOX) are identical, and a number of other chapters are a combination of the earlier MS chapters. There are complete sentences and paragraphs in the 1911 MS in Chapter IV (on Kennel Management) that appear verbatim on pages 61, 62 . . 63 in the 1948 book.

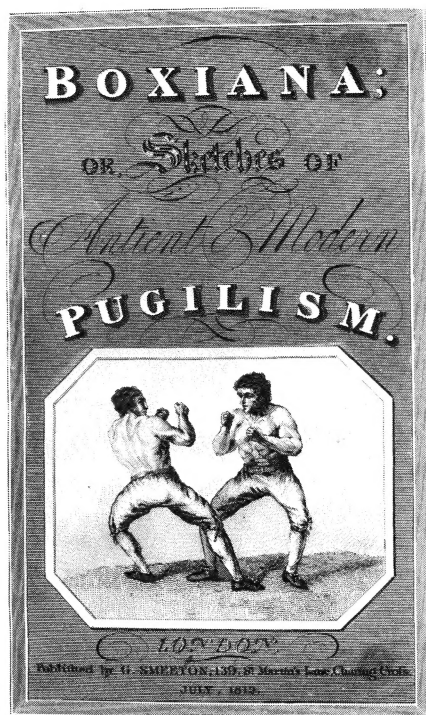
There are also a great many differences between the two books. When he wrote the 1911 MS Higginson was 35 years old and had spent most of his adult years foxhunting in the United States. He had acquired a great deal of knowledge and wanted to impart it:

"We all have hobbies. Mine is foxhunting. I think of it, dream of it, talk of it all the time, and so in the long winter evenings when the country is frozen up, and I can only sit at home and hear my hounds singing in their kennels, it has seemed natural to write of it. If it proves a help to any one, I shall be glad.

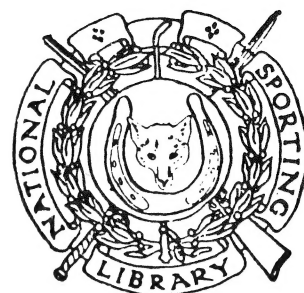
(From the Preface of the 1911 MS)

By the time that Higginson started going to England in 1912 he must have realized how much more there was that should be included in such a book, especially because of all the new things he was learning about foxhunting in the "old country." The 1911 MS and the 1948 book are a sort of before and after in Higginson's foxhunting career. This is one of the reasons why the 1911 MS is of interest to students, foxhunters and people who are interested in the life and times of A.H.H.

John H. Daniels  
May 21, 1982



*The "Golden Age" of boxing during the reign of King George III was ushered in by the first "scientific" champion, Daniel Mendoza whose four matches with "Gentleman" Richard Humphreys were classics of the time. A notable series of prints by Robert Cruikshank and "others equal"; of these matches was made as well as a number of portraits of the contestants. Shown above is the illustration of Mendoza and Humphreys "in their third public contest for Superiority, on September 29, 1790", first published in 1812 and featured opposite the frontispiece of Pierce Egan's BOXIANA: OR SKETCHES OF ANCIENT AND MODERN PUGILISM, Volume I of a five volume set published 1823-1829. This set and the folio edition of PORTRAITS IN COLOR TO EGAN'S BOXIANA are a gift to the National Sporting Library from the Harry T. Peters, Jr. estate.*



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